



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS



Testimony of Raymond Philbrick  
Supervisor, Statewide Security, Department of Public Works  
To the Labor Committee  
February 1, 2011

House Bill 5174  
An Act Concerning  
State Employees and Training to Deal With Workplace Violence

Twelve years ago, in the wake of the tragedy that occurred at the Connecticut Lottery in March of 1998, the General Assembly enacted Public Act 99-220, An Act Concerning Security for State Facilities, now codified at Chapter 60a of the Connecticut General Statutes.

The act charged the Department of Public Works (DPW) with developing and then implementing a comprehensive security program for state employees at State-owned and leased facilities. New procedures were initiated and the program remains operational today. It is a responsibility that the DPW undertakes with the utmost seriousness.

One of DPW's first initiatives was to partner with several other agencies, most notably the Department of Administrative Services, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Department of Public Safety, and the Office of Policy and Management, including its Office of Labor Relations, and in the preparation of a **workplace violence policy and procedures manual** for use at all state agencies. This manual known as the "Violence in the Workplace Policy and Procedures Manual for Human Resource Professionals" was most recently updated in September of 2010.

The DPW also played an active role in both the development and delivery of the original workplace violence prevention training program that was attended by several hundred human resources professionals. This is an area where we have a demonstrated degree of expertise and given the criticality of this subject matter, it is an area where we are always willing to offer our assistance.

We have gained a tremendous amount of knowledge from our experience in managing numerous workplace violence incidents and agencies seek our assistance and expertise on a regular basis. We have also continued to train on the topic internally and stay up to date on research in the area. We understand that far and away the most effective tool against workplace violence is to maintain open lines of communication and an employee base that is continually educated on the subject. Workplace violence prevention is not a subject that should be taught once and then put on a shelf

somewhere to be forgotten. Rather it should be continually reviewed and reinforced to ensure that employees have a clear understanding of the critical role they can play in preventing these tragedies.

As in most of these cases, including workplace and school violence, there is usually information that comes to light in the aftermath that a colleague or supervisor had a suspicion that something was wrong. It is essential to impress upon all our employees that each agency has a threat assessment team in place to investigate these matters by gathering information, comparing notes and when warranted developing the best course of action to prevent the next tragedy from occurring. The intent is not necessarily to be punitive but rather to intervene early before a situation spirals out of control. Providing our employees with a basic understanding of the early warning signs and whom to contact to report these types of concerns is paramount to maintaining a safe and secure work environment for everyone.

The Department of Public Works has over a decade of experience administering the statewide workplace violence prevention program and stands ready to assist the committee with any refinements to that program that it deems appropriate to enact. If the intent is to codify our existing program, with minor adjustment, we would assume this could be accomplished within existing resources. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

For further information, please contact:

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